

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 13285 231444Z

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7831

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 13285

NODIS

FOR EAGLEBURGER FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, UR

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION WITH THE SOVIETS ON BLOOD COUNT

REF: MOSCOW 13148, STATE 205848

1. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH DR. JOHNSON ON APPROACHING SOVIETS FOR BLOOD-COUNT DATA, I AM INCREASINGLY DUBIOUS ABOUT TAKING SUCH ACTION. JOHNSON FEELS STRONGLY THAT ANY INFORMATION WE MIGHT EVENTUALLY RECEIVE FROM SOVIETS (AND HE AGREES SOVIET RESPONSE IN ANY CASE WILL BE DELAYED FOR HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL DECISION) WOULD NOT BE OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE OR UTILITY TO US BECAUSE WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RELY ON THE SOVIET DATA. GIVEN POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE PROBLEM, JOHNSON BELIEVES THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF ANY INFORMATION WE WOULD RECEIVE FROM SOVIETS WOULD BE HIGHLY SUSPECT AND THAT IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT UNBIASED TEST RESULTS FROM THEM. HE NOTES THAT SOVIETS REFUSE TO GIVE US CURRENT STATISTICS ON PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS AND HE RATES THE LIKELIHOOD OF SOVIET COOPERATION ON THE POLITICALLY-CHARGED QUESTION OF BLOOD COUNTS AS VERY LOW INDEED.

2. I INCLINE TO AGREE WITH JOHNSON, ALTHOUGH WE COULD MAKE A TRY WITH THE SOVIETS IF YOU AND MED FEEL WE
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 13285 231444Z

SHOULD. IF WE FOLLOW THIS COURSE, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD

MAKE APPROACH TO MINISTRY OF HEALTH HERE LOW-KEY AND
AS APOLITICAL AS POSSIBLE. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT, IF
IT IS DECIDED TO PROCEED, DCM COULD CALL INITIALLY ON
DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH. BASICALLY, HOWEVER, I THINK
WE WOULD BE EMBARKING ON SOMETHING WHICH WILL EITHER
PRODUCE NO RESULTS AT ALL OR RESULTS WHICH WILL NOT BE
USEFUL FOR OUR PURPOSES.
STOESSEL

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